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MATERIALISATION.

A Leamington correspondent wishes to know what is meant by "materialisation." Leaving verbal definitions to others, we have seen no evidence that at *séances* anything has ever been materialised from the spirit world. When hands, arms and faces are "materialised," as it is called, the matter in them seems to be drawn chiefly from the body of the medium and not from the realms above; man-made drapery is brought into the *séance* room and carried away again by the spirits, and so on with other earthly objects. At the present time no Spiritualist is able to produce any substance said to have been materialised at a spirit circle, which on microscopic and chemical examination can be proved not to belong naturally to this earth. Between matter and spirit a great gulf appears to be fixed, and all that spirits can do is not to create but to govern and manipulate matter.

The Materialist has as yet been unable to show how matter can evolve the facts of consciousness. As Professor Tyndall said in effect at Norwich, if love could be shown to accompany a right-handed spiral motion of the molecules of the brain, and hate a left-handed spiral motion, the gulf between matter and consciousness would be as impassable as ever.

No such blocked thoroughfare checks the Spiritualist. As we originally pointed out, a mesmerist by psychological impression can surround five or six sensitives for half-an-hour with an apparently material world which is real to them; why then should not a Higher Power by extended use of the same spiritual laws, surround all of us for three-score-years-and-ten with a world which is material to us, but which we then lose when it has more or less served its educational purpose?

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A PHYSIOLOGICAL THEORY OF MESMERISM*.
BY FRANK PODMORE, B.A., (OXON).

Rudolf Heidenhain, Man of Science, Professor of Physiology in the University of Breslau, has had his attention directed to the phenomena of Mesmerism, and has published an account of certain experiments which he has personally conducted, and an explanation of the results arrived at, based on accepted principles of physiology. The facts which he relates will be sufficiently familiar to most readers of the *Spiritualist*, but the theory of their cause which he elaborates is not only almost entirely new—having been only partially anticipated by Braid—but is of considerable interest to all who look with favour on any attempt to explain the abnormal by subsuming it under known laws of Nature.

REFLEX ACTION IN MESMERISM.

Briefly stated, Professor Heidenhain's theory is, that all the movements of the mesmerised subject are the result of reflex action ; the higher sensorimotor centres being inhibited by means of the gentle and prolonged excitation of some of the more important sensory nerves, generally those in connection with the eyes, or the skin of the face.

A reflex action is one in which muscular movement follows directly on a given stimulus without the accompaniment of consciousness, that is, in physiological language, where the stimulus does not pass through the volitional centres. When, for instance, the eyelid rapidly closes to exclude a grain of dust, or when upon a sudden irritant, we cough or sneeze, the action is reflex. It is not possible to draw any clear line of demarcation between those actions which are reflex and those which are volitional. In the lowest organisms all movements are strictly reflex ; and it is only with the gradual elaboration and differentiation of the nervous system that conscious movements begin. With ourselves and the vertebrates generally, whilst many movements are always reflex, and many more seem invariably to be accompanied by consciousness, there are some which, though originally conscious, may under certain circumstances, and in certain individuals be performed automatically. And of these movements there are all degrees—from those which are almost entirely automatic, up to those which lie in the twilight that immediately borders on the full light of consciousness. Lord Macaulay walking through

the streets at four miles an hour, and reading Plato the while, could have been conscious only in a remote degree of the movements which he made to avoid the passers-by. And actions which in the beginning were accompanied by a sense of deliberate effort, by frequent repetition come to be performed involuntarily. The practised musician, for instance, will frequently, whilst playing from notes, have his full attention directed to some other subject. In this case, the impression made upon the retina is probably conveyed by the sensory nerve direct to a sub-conscious sensorimotor centre, and thus by means of nerve connections, which have through constant use become organised in the tissue of the ganglion, excites the required motions of the fingers. At other times his attention is directed to the notes, and the stimulus takes a longer round, and passes through the ganglia situated in the periphery of the cerebral hemispheres, on the excitation of which consciousness and volition depend.

To make this plainer: the simplest form of nerve-connection, and that which obtains generally amongst the lowest animals, may be symbolised by A. Here the right branch represents the sensory nerve, the apex of the A represents the nerve centre, and the left branch the motor nerve. Any stimulus,—say a blow on one of the limbs—will pass up the one branch as a sensory impression, be reflected at the apex or ganglion, and pass down the other as a motor impulse, and the limb will be withdrawn through the consequent contraction of the muscles. But in the vertebrates the nervous mechanism must be represented by an A. Strictly, indeed, by an A with many cross strokes. In ourselves and the highest vertebrates there are many centres, each subordinate to a higher centre, and each capable in itself of bringing about reflex actions of gradually increasing complexity as we ascend the scale, from the simplest co-ordinated movements following on a tactful stimulus, for which the spinal cord is sufficient, up to the highly complex actions excited by a written word or articulate sound, for which the highest sub-conscious centres of the brain are required.

DR. FERRIER'S EXPERIMENTS.

A single experiment of Dr. Ferrier's will best illustrate the facts. If we pinch a frog's toe, the leg will after an appreciable interval of time be withdrawn. Let this interval be exactly measured, and now, having cut off the frog's head, again pinch the toe. The leg

**Animal Magnetism: Physiological Observations by Rudolf Heidenhain, M.D., Translated from the fourth German edition by J. C. Wooldridge, B. Sc. London, with a preface by G. J. Romanes, M.A., F.R.S. London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1880.*

will, as in the former case, be withdrawn, but the interval between the stimulus and the resulting movement will be definitely shorter than when the frog was uninjured. In the former case, the stimulus travelled up to the apex of our symbolic A—to the brain to wit—and the action was a conscious one. In the latter case, the stimulus perforce took the shorter road, through the cross strokes—in this instance representing the spinal cord—and the action was reflex. Or, as all actions are reflex in the sense of being ultimately determined by sensory impressions, we may with Ferrier call the action in the latter case, when the stimulus is unfelt, and the movement unwilled, hypnoctico-kinetic, or in the vulgar tongue unconscious.

MISS MARTINEAU'S EXPERIENCE.

In many other cases, actions which are ordinarily performed consciously, may, when the conscious centres are otherwise occupied, take place reflexly, that is hypnoctico-kinetically. When the apex of our symbolic A is absorbed in working out a mathematical problem, all ordinary sensory impulses stop short. We see with our eyes, but do not perceive; we hear with our ears, but do not understand. When this preoccupation is complete, so that the cortical centres are precluded thereby from receiving any impressions from without, they are said to be inhibited. Of this condition, when self-induced, Miss Martineau gives some very remarkable instances in her Autobiography. She relates that, when she was a child, a large comet appeared, at which all the members of her family would gaze for hours night after night. She alone, filled with an absorbing desire to see it, throughout the whole time of its appearance never saw the comet at all. Her highest visual centres were so entirely preoccupied with the expectation, that they could no longer admit outward impressions.* So, a few years afterwards, on being taken for the first time to look at the sea, she was unable, for a few minutes, to see anything beneath the cliff on which she stood. She also records, that Mrs. Somerville, when engaged in writing, was quite unconscious of any auditory impressions. Her husband would sit by her writing table, and tell a friend in his ordinary tones, that his wife used rouge, wore false teeth and hair, &c., and she would work on undisturbed, until he called her by name.

* It seems probable that the strength of her emotion caused such violent excitation of the visual centre, as for a time to destroy its receptivity—that depending, as in a photographic plate, upon a condition of highly unstable molecular equilibrium.

The inhibition in these cases, it will be observed, is of one sensory centre only, and the general consciousness is either simply not diminished, or actually exalted. Professor Heidenhain's theory requires the inhibition of the whole sensorium, and the total abolition of consciousness and volition for the time being. In proof of his position he shews that the primary symptoms of the hypnotic state are the loss of voluntary motion—the subject being unable first to control the muscles of the eyelids and mouth—and of consciousness, the subject shewing no pain when a pin is thrust into the flesh, and no disgust when he is made to drink vinegar or ink. When this stage has once been reached, his actions, as the Professor takes pains to shew, become purely reflex. The sensorium, of which not the least important function is to select from amongst all given stimuli those which shall be acted on, and to suppress those which shall not, being virtually abolished, the body is left without a guiding principle, and answers indifferently to every stimulus. The man becomes a mere soulless automaton, to be played on by anyone who knows how to touch the keys aright. But even here there are degrees to be noticed. When the hypnosis has implicated the higher subordinate centres, the only reactions are those to direct tactful stimuli, and a condition is produced resembling catalepsy, when, through irritation by means of stroking, the muscles, either locally or generally, become contracted, and remain so until a counter-stimulus is applied. In this condition the patient can be placed in any posture or made rigid, so as to allow of the operator standing upon his extended body, supported by chairs at the extremities only. In other cases, when the inhibition has not proceeded so far, the subject answers to visual stimuli, and repeats movements executed before him. In yet other cases, he will answer to auditory stimuli, to the extent of performing complicated actions at the command of the operator. Occasionally too, the words of the operator can call up hallucinations in the mind of the subject, and he will flee in terror from an imaginary lion, or, with a piece of bone for a knife, will dissect out the thoracic viscera of an imaginary dead body.

These are all the phenomena of those commonly called mesmeric which the Professor recognises. He also shews that, in the hypnotic state, certain motor reactions follow from irritation of special parts of the skin:—a backward movement of the leg, *e.g.* from

stimulation of a certain spot in the region of the loins. Again, certain subjects will repeat words uttered in their presence, if the back of the neck, or the pit of the stomach, be pressed by the hand. There are also certain abnormal visual phenomena connected with the hypnotic state.

HEIDENHAIN'S METHOD OF EXPERIMENTING.

For the means by which the described condition is induced, Heidenhain looks to the actual proceedings of the professional mesmerist. He first causes his subjects to fix their gaze on a glass button, or other bright object. After some few minutes he gently passes his hand over the face, always in the same direction, and barely touching the surface. If he is a fairly good subject the process is now complete, and the customary reactions may be observed. The result of these manœuvres, according to Heidenhain, is to violently excite the sensory centres, with which the nerves from these organs communicate, and through them to irritate, and ultimately to inhibit, the whole sensorium. In further proof of this theory, he observes that in many subjects the glass button alone, or the passes alone, or even a watch held close to the ear, is sufficient to bring about the desired condition. The essential point appears to be that the stimulation should be rhythmical, *i.e.*, that the successive stimuli should be of equal intensity, and should follow at equal intervals. A few analogous instances are cited of the inhibition of motor centres through the stimulation of sensory nerves, *e.g.* paralysis of the respiratory muscles, through the artificial stimulation of the sensory nerve of the larynx. And the activity of sensory centres may in the same way be greatly diminished, as when by the application of a mustard poultice to one arm, the sensibility of the corresponding part of the other arm is lessened.

So much for the theory. As a purely physiological one it is eminently noteworthy, though somewhat defective, because of the large assumptions which it requires. That in all the instances which have come under Heidenhain's notice, the higher cerebral centres have been in some way thrown out of action—thus much is clear. And this, in itself, is no small thing to have proved. We have henceforth so much solid ground to start from on our further exploration. That of all the phenomena here recorded—save only those of abnormal vision already alluded to—the inhibition of these higher centres is of itself a sufficient explanation, seems also clear, though not so clear.

But that the cause of this inhibition is the mere stimulation, monotonous or otherwise, of a few sensory nerves is not clear at all. The analogies offered are of the most general and inconclusive kind. The mere fact of inhibition under certain circumstances, of certain ganglia, was already well-known. But the suggested cause here appears utterly inadequate to the effect. It is not a few sensory or a few motor ganglia, but the entire sensorium and the whole apparatus of voluntary movement, which are to be inhibited through the irritation of the nerves of one or at most two special senses. The activity of these sensorimotor centres is to be not merely diminished, but altogether suppressed—and that in many cases, for hours together. There is no attempt made even to bring forward analogous instances, as could readily be done, to prove that a rhythmical stimulation is more potent than an irregular one—and it needs to be immeasurably more potent to perform the task which is here required of it. The method of torture by falling water-drops, employed by the Spanish Inquisition, and the irritation induced in many persons by the monotonous repetition of any sound are well-known examples, and there are other instances which will suggest themselves to the student of physiology. We cannot, indeed, say that it is impossible that such stimuli should produce the effects here ascribed to them—the extent of our physiological knowledge will not permit us so to dogmatise. We have hardly even the right to say that it is improbable. But we would point out that not only would our previous knowledge of the processes of inhibition not have enabled us to foresee these facts, but that no instances of inhibition similarly induced can be brought forward, except those very phenomena which it is sought to explain by this theory of inhibition. An hypothesis so based, on a series of phenomena inadequately examined and imperfectly collated, is based, insecurely. Until far more close and convincing analogies have been adduced, we can do no more than hold this part of the theory not proven.

INSUFFICIENCY OF PROFESSOR HEIDENHAIN'S THEORY.

As a full explanation of all the facts of mesmerism, moreover, the theory is obviously insufficient. It is at best an indispensable presupposition in all future theories. It explains certain elementary facts more or less adequately, but it does not even touch the phenomena of action at a distance, mind-reading and clairvoyance, and it merely points the way to a possible explanation of mesmeric healing.

To begin with, the theory offers no possible explanation of the personal influence of the operator. Indeed Heidenhain expressly says that such influence is impossible. "There is no question of any specific force exerted by the experimenter upon the passive subject;" and he immediately adds, with what, in a man of less real ability than the Professor, we should be justified in calling ignorant impertinence; "I am quite ready to suppose Mr. Hansen (a professional mesmerist in Breslau) believes in his possession of such a power. But for physiologists this is out of the question," (p. 32.) If one person succeeds, where another has failed, it is because his hands are warmer, or his patience greater. Indeed, it is obvious that if the means for inducing the hypnotic state are purely mechanical, one man must be as good an operator as another. Whether this is actually the case, or not, I must ask practical mesmerists to decide.

That by excitation, through operating on the sensory nerves, of the nerve centres, which control, amongst other things, the flow of blood to an organ, the facts of curative mesmerism may be partially explained, is obvious; but it is equally obvious, that until the theory is more firmly established, and the facts better known, such explanation must remain a partial one.

Professor Heidenhain lays considerable stress on the trustworthiness of his subjects, many of them students at Breslau. I hold that the student of an English University is not less trustworthy than the student of a German University, and I will ask the Professor how to explain, on any mere theory of hypo-noetico kinetic action, the following experiments performed by myself and some of my friends at Oxford. Two of us, after previous consultation, placing our hands on the neck, or above the hips so as nearly to meet in front of the body, of a third, (both of these regions, it may be noticed, are stated by the Professor to react readily in the hypnotic state to certain auditory stimuli), would will him to perform a certain action. I have seen the subject, when thus influenced, without any possibility of word, or pressure, or motion, revealing our wish, blow out a candle, select a particular pipe out of many on the rack, or take up any required object; and frequently without the least hesitation. On one occasion we willed that the subject should leave the room. Our idea was that he would go straight to the door, and when he went to the sofa instead, we began to think the experiment a failure. But he carefully selected an academic cap and gown from the heap that

lay there, and only then went to the door and opened it. There was no imitative action here. There was automatic carrying out of a command; but the command was addressed to no outward organ of sense in any known symbols. Yet the thing happened. Of other reported phenomena of mesmerism, though implying thereby no disbelief in the narrators, I do not speak in detail, because such have not come under my own observation.

But, though Heidenhain takes little account of other labourers, even scientific labourers, in the same field before him, though, as a physiological hypothesis, his theory appears to be built on somewhat slender foundations, and though it offers but a meagre and inadequate explanation of the facts, it is yet of very considerable value to all students of mesmerism. We should be especially grateful to him, in that he has once more brought these phenomena, even in a mutilated form, within the notice of legitimate science. His pamphlet is a useful and an instructive one.

AN ARBITRARY BOUNDARY TO UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE.

But it is unconsciously instructive in a way that the Professor, no doubt, little intended. Throughout there is the implication, more or less decently veiled, that the precise limit reached from time to time by Professor Heidenhain, is the limit in that direction of all men's knowledge, past, present and to come. Here is a naïve confession of the attitude of the typical man of science. He remarks (p. 5) that after witnessing these phenomena, "the spectator is at a loss for an explanation, and finally arrives at the very reasonable conclusion that the whole affair is nonsense, or, if his scientific convictions are less sound, feels he is really in the presence of a new natural force . . ." But we will give the Professor, not the lie direct, but the retort courteous. We will not ask which is the more "scientific" view, conceding that a Professor of Physiology is the best judge of that. But we will ask which is the truer view, which more in accordance with the known facts of the case, more in accordance even with that meagre allowance of facts which he doles out to us,—that these phenomena are nonsense, or that they are the effects of a new force, that is, of some cause with the nature of which we are not yet fully acquainted. Or, if that question be found too hard to answer, we will ask simply, which view is more justified by the whole history of the past, which yields more promise for the future, which tends more to widen the domain of science herself; and which bars the gates against new truth, and builds a

wall that would shut out the sun from the truth that we have already gained, lest perchance it should *grow*, and burst its boundaries.

I feel that I ought not to close this article without expressing my thanks to Dr. Purdon, who first drew my attention to Heidenhain's work, and who has himself propounded, in a recent number of this journal, a theory of "spiritual" phenomena, based on the same broad lines as Professor Heidenhain's, though wider, and seeing that he is conscious, not only of what he knows, but of what he does not know, at present less distinctly formulated.

18th November.

EXTRAORDINARY RING TESTS.

THREE SEANCES WITH MRS. NUGENT JAMES.

BY GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

A fortnight ago I reported a *séance* I had at the house of Captain James.

At that *séance* I met Mr. and Mrs. Nugent James, and told them how I had been to many sittings with Husk, and had always found rings placed over the arms of various sitters, but that no spirit had ever succeeded in threading a ring on my arm.

Mrs. James replied, she was sure Peter could do it for me, as he did it for others continually ; and she and Mr. James very kindly invited me to *séances* at their house, 37, Upper George Street.

I have attended three of these *séances*, and the phenomena have improved as the *séances* have succeeded each other.

At first I could not induce Peter to pass a thick iron ring, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches inside diameter, bought by myself in Oxford Street, and marked, round my arm, but at the second and third *séances* he has passed this small ring many times round the wrists of Mrs. James, Mrs. Showers, Mr. Showers and Mr. (X) Showers.

This stout iron ring measures exactly $7\frac{11}{16}$ inches internal circumference, while the hands of the two Mr. Showers, as measured by string tightly drawn round the compressed hand so as to *indent* the flesh, measure $8\frac{1}{4}$ and $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches, that is to say, a body measuring $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches passed through an aperture $7\frac{11}{16}$ —a *physical* impossibility.

Rings of copper wire, which I twisted with pincers tightly round the wrists of the two Mr. Showers, were also taken off in the dark, while a closely fitting copper wire twisted round Mrs. James' wrist was seen falling from her wrist in the light.

As these copper rings were only twisted and not soldered or sealed, it may be suggested

that spirit fingers, which are so strong and active, might have untwisted the wire, removed the rings, and then retwisted the wire so that when inspected in the light they might appear as if they had been removed intact.

I mention this as possible, although a power which could place and remove a thick iron ring which it was found quite impossible to put on or remove from the wrists of the two gentlemen by physical force, need not have condescended to subterfuges regarding the wire rings.

At the third *séance* I suspended four endless cords round the necks of four sitters ; two were also sealed, the other two tied with all my force by two knots but not sealed ; and towards the end of the *séance* Peter said, "Me and the Pope will see what we can do to tie a knot for you." A minute afterwards he said "I've dood it." We lighted up, and found that two knots had been tied on the tape on which I had placed no seal. Of course it would have been more satisfactory had a seal been placed there. These little difficulties are constantly occurring at *séances*, but as Captain James on Sunday got a knot tied on an endless tape sealed, the sealed ends being held in his hand, I have no doubt I shall, probably at next *séance*, obtain knots on my cords after the manner of Zöllner's experiments.

At one of these *séances* every sitter present, except myself, had the ring placed on the arm and then removed from the arm.

At the second *séance* rings were placed on the wrists of various members present and removed ; in all, eight operations in about half-an-hour.

At the third *séance* the rings were placed on the wrist and removed very rapidly, eleven times. The last instance was curious ; Mr. Showers had the thick iron ring on his wrist when we broke up the *séance*. He could not possibly pass it off over his hand ; every one present saw the utter impossibility of doing so. I then suggested he should hold the medium's hand, and merely put their joint hands in the semi-darkness behind the curtain, when the ring at once fell off, the hands remaining still joined.

The rapidity of these ring operations at this third *séance* exceeded those of all previous records known to me.

These *séances* interest me, chiefly because of the ring tests, but during these performances hands touch all round almost incessantly ; all sorts of articles were brought to the table from the distant parts of the room, and the piano was continually being played on ; the musica

capabilities improving with each *scéance*, and finally not only the voices of Peter, Ebenezer, and John King were continually heard, but a mask-like face formed and melted about twelve times; the features had no resemblance to those of any one present.

On each occasion after closing the dark *scéances* Mrs. James went behind a shawl held up before her, and when perfectly secured by hands and neck by tapes passed through the back of the chair, articles placed on her lap were pitched out immediately into the room. Contact with these articles by the hands or mouth of the medium was quite impossible, and as I did the tying and also held the feet, which are left outside the shawl, I am satisfied that these articles were moved by an intelligent force outside the medium.

On one occasion I was allowed, blind-folded, to go behind her shawl; and as I held her hands behind her back with my right hand, and held her feet with my left hand, and secured her head by the pressure of my own head, the articles were pitched about as they were when the medium was not held, thus affording a perfect proof of power independent of the medium. The last phenomena occurred in gas-light.

With the exception of Slade, I have not had the advantage of experimenting with any medium equal to Mrs. James, and as she and Mr. James are so kind as to ask me still further to prosecute my experiments, I hope one day to obtain the passage of an iron ring six inches in diameter over the *neck* of the medium or someone else present.

12, Great Cumberland Place, Hyde Park, London.
Nov. 23rd, 1880.

A HAUNTED HOUSE IN FLORENCE.

BY COLONEL SIR WILLIAM TOPHAM.

If you think that the accompanying statement will be interesting to your readers, I place it in your hands for publication.

The name of the narrator (an English lady) is, for personal reasons, omitted; but having received her statement from a friend of my own, to whom she solemnly communicated it, I can readily vouch for its truth.

Biarritz, November 18th, 1880.

STATEMENT OF ONE OF THE WITNESSES.

"The house in which I at present reside, and which for some years has been my home, is a large rambling old-fashioned villa in the neighbourhood of Florence, whose internal architecture gives evidence of its having been built at different periods—those periods probably distant from each other. The oldest part

of the house, judging from the ornaments of a chapel, which forms part of it, must, I should say, have been constructed in the early part of the 16th century. The rooms which I occupy are almost immediately above the chapel, and communicate on one side with the lower part of the house by a narrow stone staircase.

"On first coming to reside here we learned that the villa had in common with many others of the same description the reputation of being haunted. Strange lights it was said had been seen issuing from the chapel windows, and unearthly noises had been heard in that part of the house to which I have alluded. Some friends passed a winter with us about five or six years since, and their servant occupied a small room on an entresol between the chapel and my rooms, but his rest became so broken, and he described the noises he heard as so peculiar, that he requested to be allowed to sleep elsewhere.

"I was formerly much in the habit of dismissing my maid early and sitting-up, either reading or writing until a late hour. At such times I have been suddenly seized with a strange fearfulness—a kind of nervous dread—more easily imagined than described; in fact it would be impossible to define my sensations at those moments further than by saying that I felt I was no longer alone. This feeling usually lasted from five to ten minutes, and invariably left a painful impression on my mind. I also often heard a peculiar rustling sound in my room, and around my bed—as though someone were agitating the bed curtains, and this sound was invariably accompanied by a chilliness, as if a door had been suddenly opened and a strong current of cold wind had rushed with violence into the room.

"These sounds and the other painful sensations which I have described, and which I was totally unable to explain, continued at intervals with greater or lesser degrees of intensity until the month of October, 1855; when much sensation was created at Florence by the arrival of Mr. Home, whose reputation as a *spirit medium* had rendered him celebrated. A short time after his arrival in Florence, the sounds in my room became more distinct and more frequent and the very *peculiar nervous* feelings of which I have spoken were not confined exclusively to myself, but were frequently shared by my sister, on her remaining any time in my room. My rest, at length, became so broken, and in consequence my health so impaired, that I had my bed removed into a room adjoining the one in which I had

been in the habit of sleeping, hoping that this change would bring me rest and quiet. The first night was undisturbed, but the next and succeeding ones were so painful that I frequently lay awake until morning. In the meantime we made Mr. Home's acquaintance ; and having been a witness of effects so wonderful as only to be ascribed to a supernatural cause, I determined to endeavour to discover through his agency the real secret of my haunted rooms.

"Mr. Home having been invited to make a stay of a few days in our house, was, on the first day of his arrival made acquainted with the mystery of my rooms, and proposed that a *séance* should be held in them for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not the strange sounds which disturbed me were to be attributed to supernatural agency. Accordingly about eleven o'clock on that same evening my sister, Mr. Home, and I repaired to my room, and placed ourselves at a small round table in front of and very near the fireplace. We were warmly covered, and the fire was blazing brightly, yet the cold that pervaded the room was intense, penetrating to the very bones. I should mention that for many previous days I had suffered from what appeared to be a cold air blowing over my body, more especially over my lower limbs ; and this cold feeling never left me, for all artificial means failed in destroying the sensation of chilliness. The same cold air was now felt by both my sister and Mr. Home to such a degree as to be painful. Previously to placing himself at the table, Mr. Home had descended to the chapel, where all was quiet. On reascending the stairs, however, he heard a sound as of a muffled bell in the chapel. We had scarcely sat a moment at the table when it began slowly to move in different directions, *generally* inclining towards the side on which I sat. Presently the movement became more violent, and assumed, if I may be allowed the expression, an angry appearance. We demanded whether a spirit were present, and the table replied by making the three usual affirmative movements. We then further inquired whether the spirit present were a good one, and were answered in the negative. We spoke in harsh terms which seemed to irritate the spirit, for the demonstrations of the table became very angry. A high-backed old-fashioned arm-chair, which stood at a little distance from the table was suddenly drawn close to it, as though someone in sitting down had drawn it.

"Mr. Home proposed that we should move into the next room (my bedroom) and try whether any further manifestations would be made. We did so, but all remained quiet ; we then returned to the room we had just quitted and sat down at another table covered with a cloth. We presently heard a rustling sound about and under the tables, such a sound as would be made by a person moving about in some heavy garment. This noise was accompanied by a scratching on the wood of the table, as though some one were scratching it with his nails. We then distinctly saw the cloth at the side of the table next to me move up, as though a hand raised it from beneath. The hand appeared to be in a menacing attitude. Mr. Home was also touched often on the knee, and he described the touch as peculiarly strong and disagreeable. We then entreated the spirit to leave us, requiring that it should return on the following evening and declare its purpose in thus tormenting us. This it promised, and on being further adjured to leave us, the demonstration ceased. The night was very unquiet, the sensation of cold of which I have before spoken accompanied me everywhere, and I heard a constant scratching under my pillow and on my bed. On the next evening we met again in my room and were joined by two other persons, one a member of our family, another a friend of Mr. Home, both men of strong nerve and dispassionate judgment. The usual cold was felt, and the table became much agitated. A small stiletto, which I use as a paper-knife, was taken from the table by an invisible hand, and drawn from the sheath. The table was lifted from the ground and was violently pushed across the room ; it stopped opposite a door leading to the staircase, and we resumed our places. A small hand-bell was taken from the table and violently rung in different directions ; the dagger was thrown about under the table, and rubbed against Mr. Home's knees ; my elbow was violently grasped by a hand *the fingers of which I distinctly saw* ; they were long, yellow and skinny ; other persons present who felt its grasp described its touch as clammy and horrible. I spoke quietly to the spirit, who in answer to questions, said that it was unhappy and that perhaps I might be of some use to it. It promised to return and speak further on the following evening, and after lifting the table several times *high above our heads*, it left us.

"The whole of the next day I was more or less tormented by a cold air which flew over

my face and limbs. In the evening, a short time before the hour appointed for the *séance*, the wind became very strong, and a hand raised the cloth of the table on which I was leaning and touched my arm, as if to remind me of my engagement. We repaired to my room ; one member of my family only was present, my sister having suffered too much from alarm on the previous evening to join us. The demonstrations of the table immediately began, but in a quieter manner than on the former occasions. I immediately spoke (I should state that the Italian language only was used) in a soothing manner. In reply to many questions the spirit told me that it was unhappy and had wandered about the house for many, many years ; that its name was *Grannia* ; that it had been a monk, and died in the room which I actually occupied. I desired to know if I should have masses said for the peace of its soul. It answered in the negative, but requested that I would pray that it should find some repose. I further begged it to tell me why on the previous evening it had made so much use of my little dagger ; and it answered that in life it had but too well known how to employ it. It then promised me never again to return to my rooms, and since that evening those painful sensations and strange noises, of which I have spoken so at length, have never returned. Frequent *séances*, where good and loving spirits have held communication with us, have been since held by their own especial request in my room.

"In fact, my rooms seem to have undergone a complete purification, and I feel that whatever painful influence did once exist has disappeared wholly, and, I trust, for ever."

Florence, 1858.

A REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF DECEPTION THROUGH SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATIONS.

BY JOHN P. TURNER.

A Mrs. I——, residing in a suburb of Birmingham, had a brother named Samuel, who had led rather a reckless time in his youth, and was sent out to Van Diemen's Land, as a convict 35 to 40 years ago.

After some years' penal servitude, he was released, and presumably entered upon a steady course of life, since years later casual information to that effect reached his relations in England.

He had married a girl shortly before his conviction, who after remaining sometime without news of him married again ; he never communicated with her or his other relations at

home, but settled in the colony somewhere or other, married and had a family.

Ultimately he was heard of within the last two or three years at a provincial town in New South Wales, where he had died previous to this information, leaving a widow and two or three grown-up children, and was reported to have left them £6,000 to £8,000.

Mrs. I——, who has long been a Spiritualist, began to be visited in 1878-79 by a spirit purporting to be her brother Samuel, whose messages were spelt out through a mediumistic friend : this spirit reminded her of their youthful affection before his banishment, and gave successive tests of identity by naming persons, places, and events that belonged to their mutual recollections of early years, so that she made no doubt of the identity of the spirit, so remarkably correct were these various allusions and remembrances ; but the main object of these was to tell her that he had left her a considerable sum in his will, vaguely intimated to reach £2,000 or £3,000, for the recovery of which he gave her sundry general directions, and especially to come to me for advice and assistance.

It must here be explained that I am trustee to Mrs. I—— for certain matters important to her, and she usually comes to me in any trouble or difficulty, so this direction had nothing peculiar about it.

She detailed to me all these singular circumstances, which impressed me much, as the evidence for the genuineness of the spiritual communications was overwhelming.

We wrote out to a correspondent in the town where Samuel died, to get information, asking him to get a copy of Samuel's will, and to let us know generally how his property was disposed of. Months passed without news, beyond the time when an answer ought to have arrived, and at last we put other machinery to work, and after considerable delay obtained a copy of Samuel's will, which contained no mention whatever of his sister, nor could we find directly or indirectly the least clue to his ever having intended to leave her anything.

Our first correspondent ultimately wrote after a long silence, declining angrily to assist in the enquiry, which he characterised as an attempt to rob the widow and children of their rights.

During the time occupied in these transactions the professed spirit of Samuel had constantly given directions or advice how to proceed, and promised unfailing results ; he even fixed periods when Mrs. I——, to whom the

money would have been a great Godsend should be in possession of this legacy, all of which proved delusive. Several times while correspondence was going on, he foretold the advent of news which proved on one or two occasions correct, but failed in others, so this went for nothing.

What are we to conclude from all this? The spirit clearly knew, somehow, a number of circumstances connected with the early life of Mrs. I—— and her brother Samuel, and seemed to have deceived her with an *ignis fatuus* about the pretended legacy.

Nearly two years ago, the same lady had a friend whose son went to Australia. During the voyage, and before news could be had of his welfare, a spirit professing to be he communicated with her, and gave several striking evidences of identity. He said he had been drowned on the voyage, news which however Mrs. I—— was wise enough not to repeat to the mother, though she did to myself.

In due course news arrived from this young man, *who had safely arrived in Australia*, showing that in this case some spirit must have played the pretender to deceive Mrs. I——.

I could give other instances of "lying spirits," so that I feel all such communications must be received with extreme caution and be most carefully tested.

Avenue Road, Leamington.

"PASSED TO THE HIGHER LIFE."

Mrs. Estelle A. Lewis, better known as "Stella," authoress of "Record of the Heart," "Sappho; a Tragedy," &c., suddenly departed this life, in London, last Wednesday morning. The deceased was an American Spiritualist in the higher sense, and the authoress of these lines:—

"Who watch life's last, departing ray
In deep despair,
And soothe my spirit on its way
With holy prayer?
* * * * *
"Draw round me my cold robes of white
In a dark spot,
To sleep through Death's long dreamless night
Lone and forgot."

A few hours before her sudden decease, she was merrily chatting with friends in the British Museum Reading-room.

SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS IN THE LIGHT.

Last Saturday night at a *séance* at 37, Upper George Street, Bryanston Square, London, Mrs. Nugent James was the medium. The other sitters present were Mr. Nugent James, Mr. and Mrs. Showers, Mrs. Juliet Heurtley (Hart-Davies), Dr. George Wyld, and Mr. W. H. Harrison.

After a *séance* in the dark, at which some

unusually powerful manifestations were produced, and some extraordinary ring tests given, as described by Dr. Wyld on another page, Mrs. James sat for manifestations in the light.

Dr. Wyld tied a string round the neck of Mrs. James; the knot, which was tightly pulled, was at the back of the neck; the two ends of this string were then tied round the upper rail of the back of the chair on which the medium sat, so that Mrs. James had but slight power to move her head in any direction.

Next Dr. Wyld tied and double-knotted a string round the wrist of Mrs. James; it was so closely tied that the string pressed a little into the flesh all round. The two ends of this string were then tied to the lower rail of the back of the chair. The other hand was next tied in the same way. Thus Mrs. James's hands were firmly tied by an acute and critical medical man, behind her back close to the lower rail of the back of her chair.

Afterwards Dr. Wyld secured the feet of the medium by holding them in his hands, as they rested upon a cushion.

A tambourine, bell, and other small instruments were placed in her lap.

The gas-light, about two yards from Mrs. James, was so adjusted as to give about the amount of illumination of a good ordinary candle.

Under these conditions, the moment a shawl was held for a moment before Mrs. James, to place her in subdued light, the musical instruments were violently played upon, and the tambourine sometimes thrown towards the ceiling, so that everybody could see it. No mortal being was behind the shawl with Mrs. James when these manifestations took place.

A ring of copper wire, belonging to Dr. Wyld, and too small to pass over the compressed hand of the medium, was placed in her lap. The instant the shawl was raised, the ring was whisked on to the wrist of one of her hands, tied, as already described, behind her back.

A tumbler containing sherry and water was placed in her lap. The instant the shawl was raised, Mrs. James, with tied neck, was heard drinking it. The shawl was lowered and the tumbler, nearly empty, found in her lap.

All the manifestations were produced almost instantaneously. The sitting lasted but for ten minutes or thereabouts.

The gaze of observers affects these manifestations, as much as the human gaze affect

mesmeric sensitives; thus the use of the shawl subcribed to another condition, beyond subduing the light. Mrs. James said that every time the shawl was raised, she saw the objects rise from her lap and move about in the air, without anything visible touching them.

At the close of the sitting Dr. Wyld cut the strings to free the medium. Examination proved that the strings and knots had been in no way tampered with, and the strings were still pressing into the flesh round the wrists.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR MR. ROBERT COOPER.

In addition to the subscriptions already announced to the English part of the fund for Mr. Robert Cooper, of Eastbourne, Mr. W. P. Adshead has contributed £1 1s., and Sir Charles Isham, Bart., £1.

The above sums raise the total of English subscriptions to £75 17s.

The following are the American subscriptions:—

A. E. Giles	\$15
Colbey and Rich	20
A. Bushley	5
Moses Daw	5
M. Smith	5
M. Haine	1
T. Bigelow	1
Horace Sear	2
Mrs. J. M. Carpenter	5
C. C. Mead	2
	—
	\$61

AN ECHO FROM THE "SILENT LAND."

BY JULIET HEURTLEY.

Revered One! It was some nameless charm
About thy nature, first awaked in me
A brighter life. When to my heart from thee,
Came mild and truthful words, O thus it chanc'd
My soul was roused, (which long had slept entranced)
In apathy). 'Twas Destiny that led
This lonely soul to find its fountain-head
Of consolation from thy noble mind!
'Twas Destiny ordained that we should meet,
O Sister of my soul! And, to complete
The story of my life—(to thee confessed)
Thou taughtest me the secret of the Blessed!
Renouncing early faults to seek the good,
God's Word became my hungry spirit's food.

* * * * *

Our thoughts exchanging in dear sympathy
For ever chimed in gentle harmony;
So, calmly passed my years of Manhood's prime
The while unconscious of the sands of Time;
Till came the hour God called me from thy side,
And, blessing thee, in peaceful joy I died!
Or rather, fell asleep—to wake refreshed
And changed—to hear my name among the Blessed.

* * * * *

O Sister of my Soul!
Redeemed and free from Mortality
My Soul awaits thee in Eternity!

Correspondence.

MATERIALISATION.

Sir,—I am obliged to G. B. for his answer to my question, which is a very instructive communication, but as we are not all mystics I will venture to put his symbolical language into my own plainer words, that he may correct me if I have misrepresented his meaning.

The idea he has conveyed to my mind is that spirit is inchoate cellular being, without personality and with an unstable or fluctuating and ultimately evanescent individuality. That this cellular being in its life-long materialisation of spirits in physical life is in an organised form, or, as we have been in the habit of expressing it, clothed in an organised body fitted to discharge the functions proper to such a body, which is necessarily evanescent because not organised or capable of discharging the functions proper to an organised body, though it can be temporarily used as a medium of communication or action.

As I further understand him, these finite portions of the Infinite Will cannot reduce their wills to acts without some channel through which to produce the action they contemplate. Even the Infinite Will has to become finite, or assume the form of a sphere, that it may act, or produce other spheres through which to carry on further action.

I am not attempting to criticise this view. I am simply trying to make it intelligible. It seems to me when stripped of all its subtleties, to teach the doctrine, primarily, that all action is mediate—and, secondarily, that spirits, as finite reproductions of the Infinite, when reducing their wills to acts in the sphere of human intelligence are, *necessarily* are, personators.

Such a doctrine certainly is conformed to spirit-practice, for it is only too common for spirits to call themselves by names to which they are not entitled, and to act parts that do not belong to them. And this is the great *crux* of Spiritualism.

M. D.

20th Nov., 1880.

INDIVIDUALITY AMONG SPIRITUALISTS.

Sir,—The paper under the above heading in your last number, treats ably and in a sympathetic manner one of the most fruitful themes in the present wave of Spiritualism.

If all Spiritualists, or those who strive to deserve that title, will, with all their hearts, ponder over the hidden causes of the present too-evident want of harmony in our movement, the hope held out that the coming year will bring us brighter issues, may indeed be realised.

In order to contribute my mite in further ventilating this pressing subject, I venture a suggestion:—The tyranny of materialism has so reduced mankind to the development of "self," the inborn instinct of worshiping a "something" having turned backward, settling on the "I," that the new light and warmth of Spiritualism have only for a short season lifted us out of the beaten track.

Having had gleams of glorious light, we have returned to the old quarters, and now tumble over our own phrenological "bumps" which nature gave us to do combat in our path through life. We should melt them down as obstacles in our course. They may have been hardened by temporary neglect, as it were, and the people now knocking against each other by oscillations of temper, feel the rough contacts the more keenly, after the holy days of Spiritualism. But if we study to learn the local nature of these obstinate materialistic remnants left on the ground, we shall begin to level them, instead of one another, thus working towards true brotherhood.

CHRISTIAN REIMERS.

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PROFESSOR ZÖLLNER'S EXPERIMENTS.

LIST OF ENGRAVINGS.

FRONTISPIECE :—The room at Leipsic in which most of the Experiments were conducted.

PLATE I :—Experiments with an Endless String.

PLATE II :—Leather Bands Interlinked and Knotted under Professor Zöllner's Hands.

PLATE III :—Experiments with an Endless Bladder-band and Wooden Rings.

PLATE IV :—Result of the Experiment.

PLATE V :—Result of the Experiment on an Enlarged Scale.

PLATE VI :—Experiments with Coins in a Secured Box.

PLATE VII :—The Representation of Test Circumstances, under which Slate-writing was obtained.

PLATE VIII :—Slate-writing Extraordinary.

PLATE IX :—Slate-writing in Five Different Languages.

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PREFACES.

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